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OPINION

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IN view of the proverbial shortness of public memory, the praise being showered on Smt. Indira Gandhi by her obsequious followers, and her own continuous attempts to represent the Emergency as beneficial to the country, readers may like to see extracts from some writings of that time by the Editor.

WHY maintain the Emergency? According to the Government because there was never greater danger to true democracy in this country than now. Quite true, some might say, wholly correct, but from whom, from which side? From the mostly powerless and harmless politicians in jail, from the easily-controlled, largely subservient Press, from the law-abiding counsel who wait for months for their pro-detenu and anti-censorship petitions to be taken up, from the judges who proceed in due course to free an occasional detenu and allow permission to appeal from their order, from the ordinarily peaceful and law-respecting mass of citizens, OR from the Government and the Congress Party, many of whose words and actions since the Emergency indicate a striking dissatisfaction with the Constitution, especially with it as an instrument for the protection of the citizen against the encroachment of the Executive?

Six months and ten days have passed since the imposition of the Emergency, time enough surely to have collected all the evidence against every detenu for any offence he or she may have committed. To the Government we would say, 'Look you, Madam and Sirs, this holding people in jail without trial does not befit a civilized government. If you have evidence against any or all of them, put them up in court, and try them. Otherwise, release them forthwith. You serve no national purpose by keeping in jail people like professors of physics and their wives, doctors and their wives, heads of institutions of higher learning, overweight, middle-weight and under-weight Members of Parliament and a whole lot of other miscellaneous types. You say there is danger from abroad. If there is, have you done what this writer has for many, many years urged you to do, made a sufficient number of nuclear weapons and got ready their means of delivery? If you have, you have nothing to fear from beyond the seas or from beyond our land frontiers. If you have not, keeping these unfortunate, mostly highly patriotic, citizens in detention, or adding to their number there is not going to enable you to meet the danger better. Your speeches of late have a note almost of hysteria. That is likely to prove much more of a danger to the nation and yourselves than the whole crowd you have locked up. The ancient text says, "the storm-cloud thunders Da, Da, Da: Damayata, Dayadhvam, Datta, Be Self-Controlled, Be Compassionate, Be Charitable!" Follow this truly

Indian advice; mighty by power you are, be also mighty by wisdom. Nor does authoritarianism destroy the value of this text. It has validity in all circumstances.'

This writer, now over three-score and fifteen, had hoped until recently to close his eyes finally in the real democracy that was India. Now the indications are that the India that will see his end will be an authoritarian state. To him this seems deplorably tragic, but if it is to be, let those who are bringing it about, the Prime Minister and Government of India, declare clearly their aim. Nothing is so disgusting as the present mishmash, in which the most undemocratic measures are taken in the name of protecting democracy, in which all life is lived in an obscure half-light. Quite clear it is that an authoritarian state can have no room for a free Press or an independent Judiciary. Both must be made into the State's transmission-belts. (6 January 1976).

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OPINION's sixteenth, and saddest, year comes to an end with this issue. Why saddest ? Because it opened in a country of free people and closes in a country of timorous, acquiescing semi-slaves. The constitutional Prime Minister of its beginning is at its end a virtual dictator. Well over a hundred thousand citizens fill the jail at her pleasure and will. They are charged with no offence; they are tried for no offence; they are found guilty of no offence. No offence ! appear to exclaim her myrmidons, is it not offence enough to have offended her ? What worse offence can there be than that ? Truly, great sirs, you say well; in this authoritarian ambience there can be none. Continue then to glorify and magnify her on bended knees, and if your kneeling in adoration be on the necks of your fellow citizens, why, so be it. They can have no objection, rather they should be gratified, shouldn't they, to have this opportunity of doing obeisance at one remove ? What further good fortune could possibly attend them ?

How this condition has come about it is unnecessary to recount; *Opinion's* columns have already dealt with the matter fully. Suffice it to say that it is the result of deliberate intention and direct action on the part of the Prime Minister. Had she desired otherwise, it was within her power and capacity to meet such difficulties as were present without this departure from democracy, thus robbing the country of its one claim to distinction. Before this Prime Ministerly perpetrated disaster, it was possible for we Indians to claim that however many our deficiencies, however gross our defects, we were a free people, possibly the only genuinely free people in the whole of Asia and East Europe. Today what are we ? Another Pakistan, a larger Ceylon, a far less efficient Singapore. Awake in the dark watches of the night, the thought comes to one that the time is upon us when nothing remains but to tear our clothes to tatters, throw dust and ashes on our heads and cry out aloud, Ichabod, the glory has departed ! All the signs indicate that the future will be uglier than the present, and that life will tend to become for the decent and the honest even more brutish and nasty.

What of *Opinion*'s fate in such a milieu ? Will it reach the end of its seventeenth year ? Will it live even a half or a quarter of the way through it ? Not very likely it would seem. At any moment, the thug's handkerchief, flung skilfully round the neck, might throttle it; the assassin's dagger be sunk deep into its heart; the dacoit gang trample it into little bits. So long as life remains to it, however, we may hope it will not be found wanting, and will continue to pursue the purpose for which it was founded, the service of the Indian people through the offering of sound comment on all aspects of public life. The more difficult, the more tempting, the time we live in, the stronger must be our resolution to seek, to strive for, to find, the good, and not to yield to the evil, which in a period like this is more than ever on the watch to see which enemy of its it may seize and overcome. (13 April 1976).

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MANY have been the interested and anxious inquiries about *Opinion* in the last month and especially in the last two weeks. 'Look', said a reader. '*Opinion* is an old and valued member of our family. We look forward to it every week. You mustn't keep any secrets about it from us, we must know everything, we've a right to.' Said another, 'It often says thing's we've been thinking for quite a time without being able to bring them out exactly. It's a part of us. Now you can't hide things about it from us, can you ?' Let me assure you, friends, I have never had the least intention of keeping anything from you. It was only a question of the proper time for placing the facts before you. The time would seem to have come now. In view of that and your insistence, here is the tale of *Opinion*'s Recent Tribulations.

As a prelude, let me tell you about pre-censorship, the process by which an editor, so directed, has to obtain the permission of the Censor to everything he wishes to publish. After some experience of this process, I found it quite incompatible with the editor's duty to his readers and the country. I accordingly proceeded without it, but keeping in mind the real purposes of censorship, the not making of prejudicial reports regarding the Defence of India and Civil Defence, the efficient Conduct of Military Operations, the Maintenance of Public Order, Internal Security, and the Public Safety. I also took into account the well-established view that criticism of personalities in government or of measures of government, even if vigorously expressed is not the same as bringing the government established by law into hatred or disrepute.

On the 28th of March arrived a notice from Government calling on me and the keeper of the press printing *Opinion* to show cause why ten issues of *Opinion* (names and dates given) should not be forfeited and why the press in which they had been printed should also not be foreited. On the next day, the keeper of the press, which had printed *Opinion* for sixteen years from its beginning, informed me he could not print it any more. The reaction was natural in view of the massive threat. So there we were, paper and Editor, at the end of our tether, without a press and with no likelihood of a press in future, considering the dark

forfeiture cloud overhanging the horizon. In the event, however, a small press proved willing to accept the burden, and despite much harrying, coped with three issues; thereafter, another and even smaller one produced two; to give way to still another which could produce just one issue, before an attack from another direction wholly stopped production.

To complete the show-cause notice incident, within the allowed ten days, information was requested on my behalf as to which of the rules each of the mentioned articles was held to be in breach of, so that a full and appropriate reply could be made to the notice. The request remained unanswered, despite a reminder, and later the articles were declared forfeited, according to a press report purporting to convey the substance of a Gazette notification.

While all this was going on, the 30th April saw an order served on me demanding that within fifteen days of service I deposit Rs. 25,000 with the Commissioner of Police, Greater Bombay, as the ten articles of the earlier notice and three others published since, contained prejudicial reports 'to promote feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes of people in India' and 'to cause fear or alarm to the public or to any section of the public'. Within the fifteen days, a petition was filed before the High Court and the hon'ble judge has stayed the order. Thus the matter stands adjourned.

Soon came another blow. The issue of the 18th May, the postal authorities would not take over for transmission because, it appeared, of directions from the Censor. After much visiting of offices at all levels it turned out that not only were the postal facilities ordinarily allowed to newspapers, like posting without prepayment, to be disallowed, but *Opinion* even with full ordinary book-post postage paid, would be taken out in sorting and not forwarded onward. What use was a journal which just couldn't be distributed by post? Severe were the penalties laid down for those who carried by other means what normally should go by post, and I could not contemplate putting others to such risk, even if they were available, and even if readers were not in fact widely scattered over the country. Thus the issue of the 25th May was not printed nor that of the 1st June. I read with a wry smile the Sr. Supdt. of Post Offices' pronouncement that I must obtain clearance from the Censor before making any future postings. The learned in the law said there could be no challenge, so, unless I accepted pre-censorship, this point in time, of the Censor's instructions to the Post Office, had to be the end. But with pre-censorship, the objectives of *Opinion*, the offering of 'fair comment' in the sense often described in these pages, could not be served. Well and skilfully had *Opinion* been hunted and killed.

An era had ended. What next in the interest of the people? Inchoate, fragmentary thoughts appeared and disappeared. Then suddenly it seemed the era had not ended. The Censor rescinded his instructions. Why, how, who, what, naturally surged through the mind. But today to itself. Hence this, readers, with apologies for the two missing before this. And the future for *Opinion*? I know not. All it and I can offer is diligent service from day to day. As it is, this issue has had to be cyclostyled.

This tale of tribulations would be incomplete without mention of happenings in the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court today (4-6-76). For the first time in my seventy-five and a half years I stood accused of offences, and for the first time too I was found guilty and fined. In the disorganization following upon the refusal of the old press to continue printing, I failed to pay proper heed, it was said, to certain provisions of the Press and Book Registration Act about declarations, print lines, etc. And the authorities pounced. (8 June 1976).

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LESS than two weeks from the first naniversary of the imposition of Emergency is an appropriate time for introspection, both by the imposer and those on whom it was imposed. To assist in that process is published below an extract from a notably perspicacious world journal:

'When Mrs. Gandhi closed down the world's biggest democracy last June the key question was: why? Was it, as she claimed, to defeat a conspiracy of reactionaries, Hindu nationalists and criminals poised to tear India apart? Was it, as we hoped (and still wish it were), a high price in freedom to be paid for the necessary task of dragging India by its boot-straps out of a never-ending economic mire? Or was it merely as expedient means of saving Mrs. Gandhi's own political skin? Thanks largely to the monsoon and increased exports, India's economy is in a rare mood of hope; but even if Mrs. Gandhi's economic policy as dictator is a jot or two better (because less anti-business) than it was as democrat, the right way to move towards freer markets is hardly to shut down freedom first. As for conspiracy, if any there was, it had crumbled under the first blow.... It looks as if self-preservation was her main motive....

'The remarkable ascent of a 30-year-old youth leader named Sanjay Gandhi has revived the same questions in another form. Did Mrs. Gandhi put many thousand people in jail, remove freedom of speech and *habeas corpus* and muzzle the press not just to preserve a throne but to build a dynasty? The answer, after 11 months of one-mother-one-son rule, seems to be yes....

The prime minister has undoubtedly endorsed her son's arrogation of power, much as her father encouraged her own early political career. Amateur psychologists in India offer two plausible explanations for this phenomenon: the classic suspiciousness of a dictator who ends up trusting only family and family retainers; the equally classic guilt of a working mother and single parent who overcomepensates by bestowing gifts—first money, in the form of the licence to build a non-productive car factory, and now power. A third explanation for Sanjay's meteoric rise since last June is that he proved himself his mother's best political adviser at that difficult time by counselling her to defy the courts, the opposition and even her own party and to proclaim that emergency.

Sanjay's ever-increasing authority during the past 11 months has not been based on any formal position; his only official job is on the executive

of the Congress Party's youth wing. But his magic name and the control his mother has delegated to him over appointments have allowed him to extend his influence—in an unpredictable and fear-inducing way—right through the Congress Party and the bureaucracy. He has also used his patronage powers to build up the beginnings of an independent political base, particularly in the states nearest the capital. (15 June 1976).

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THIS is to explain why there will be no more issues of *Opinion*. The Government of Maharashtra, apprehending from its further appearance danger to public safety, maintenance of public order and internal security (believe it if you can), with the prior approval of the Government of India, prohibits me from making and publishing *Opinion* and from using any press for these purposes.

Neither the Government of India nor the Government of Maharashtra can be so stupid as to harbour the apprehensions they profess to do. They know *Opinion*'s reasoned columns offer no comfort to the rabblerouser or the conspirator. They know the public *Opinion* serves. Such people do not riot in the streets. They read, they think, they argue, they consider, they come to their own conclusions. And it is these conclusions the regime is so afraid of, the conclusions reached by the minute fraction of educated India constituting *Opinion*'s readership! What a tribute, in their own peculiar way, these mighty, powerful Governments pay to *Opinion*'s readership and to *Opinion*, when they decide they cannot allow this tiny organ of public information and public reasoning to live!

The real basis of the prohibition would seem to be different. The current Indira regime, founded on June 25, 1975, was born through lies, nurtured by lies, and flourishes on lies. The essential ingredient of its being is the lie. Consequently, to have a truth-loving, straight-thinking, plain-speaking journal examine it week after week and point out its falsehood, becomes intolerable to it. The feeling grows, this is too much, this just can't be endured, why it might even affect the dictatorship—sometimes disguised as the new democracy—Indiraji has so recently established, after such great pains, over this hitherto free land.

For true lovers of the country and of freedom, the present is a tragic time, and the future likely to be even more saddening. In such periods it is important to realize that the seat of freedom in man is the mind. Preserve its integrity and all is not lost. The pressures upon a man may be enormous, yet if he sees clearly and judges accordingly, there is still room for hope. People accustomed to freedom sometimes ask despairingly, 'This terrible time, when will it end?' I know not when, but this is sure that if they and we lose courage, it may never. Whatever the duration, upon us all it is incumbent so to bear ourselves in it as if its end were certain, the dawn inevitable after this long-stretched-out dark night.

And so, farewell. (13 July 1976). (Sent as a private letter to all readers.)

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UNFORTUNATE the land that has an arrant liar at the head of its obsequious administration! The atmosphere of government is then irretrievably vitiated; the men engaged in its tasks see things not as they are but as the chief has made them appear in his lies. A haziness shadows all eyes, and decisions can scarcely be on merits.

The ordinary liar is almost invariably aware that he is lying, and that the truth is otherwise. The arrant liar gets so carried away that for him there is no distinction between the fact and his fancy. After a few repetitions he believes his lie to be true, and anybody who states the truth opposed to his lie becomes to him an enemy to be crushed.

Consider these most recent examples of the arrant lie (*Indian Express*, 18-8-1976): 'Prime Minister Gandhi told the Indian community living in Sri Lanka that the emergency in India had now been considerably relaxed and "it is no longer the same rigid one of the type when it was imposed".' But people in India are still being jailed without trial an'd even without cause given. The fundamental freedoms are as curtailed as ever. Except in the Prime Minister's mind there is no relaxation. She having fancied that there has been relaxation, believes it firmly to be fact. So for her there has been relaxation and she has no hesitation in stating it.

'Mrs. Gandhi said there was no Press censorship now and even the guidelines to the Press had been "greatly" relaxed.' This, when af least one journal has been forcibly closed down by order of Government for not submitting to pre-censorship, and when a leading daily newspaper has not been able to appear for several days owing to pre-censorship difficulties! Anyone who has any access to any editorial office knows how false the statement is. Yet Mrs. Gandhi makes it with perfect aplomb.

'She added, most of the people who had been taken into custody when the emergency was imposed had been released.' In fact, most of those arrested are still in jail, though fourteen months have passed. Time and again has government been asked to give the figures of the people arrested. Time and again it has chosen not to do so. Recently the Home Minister took refuge in a rounabout formula which would mean that only about forteen thousand had been detained! Independent sources put the figures at between one lakh twenty thousand and two lakhs.

'The question facing India today was how to make the people responsible to the nation without forcing them to do so, Mrs. Gandhi said.' Is the nation then something apart from the people? Is it an abstract concept like the dictatorship of the proletariat meaning a dictatorship over the proletariat by those who have seized power? In our view the people and the nation are one and there is no national interest other than the people's interest. Those who seek to differentiate between the two would seem to be serving some end of their own; arrogating to themselves the right to speak for, to manipulate, to wield power, in the name of the nation, over the people, the mass of Indians who constitute the entity India. Such individuals and groups are in fact authoritarian, as appears quite clearly from the use of the word 'forcing' above.

Democrats do not force the people to do things. They reason with

them, they persuade them, and in the Indian context, they very often succeed. Not a single measure for the people's good put forward by the government have the people opposed in the years since Independence. The defaults that there have been, have been by the government for reasons of its own. Nor again has the Government, when governing according to the law, been prevented from exercising its authority by the people. If for its own purpose in order to create an atmosphere and impression of crisis, it chooses deliberately not to use remedies lawfully within its power, it surely is not for it to complain about the people's behaviour and attitude, to proclaim Emergency and use of extraordinary measures against the people.

The real question facing India today would thus seem to be not the most mendacious one posed by Mrs. Gandhi, but how to make the Government responsible to the people. That at the present under a dictatorship, they are the victims of authoritarian rule, is quite clear to all who have eyes to see, ears to hear and minds to think. Even Indians whose interests make them compromise or who are professional defenders of the Government, find it difficult to argue otherwise, and not unoften seek refuge in attacking our system of democratic government. They say, 'Ah, that's the villain ; it's not the people, oh no, but the system, so difficult to work with so many of our people so poor and illiterate. No, no, let's have another that reduces the strain and burden on them, cuts down their rights, imposes on them duties, gives much more power to the Government—bound to be wise and understanding, of course—is in fact authoritarian without bearing that abhorred name.'

That is the danger we face, dear friend. May you perceive it, and not just intellectually ! As old John Barbour sang in the fifteenth century for people most of whom were also poor and illiterate :

A ! fredome is a noble thing !
Fredome mayse man to haiff liking,
Fredome al solace to man giffis,
He levys at eat that frely levys."

Yours sincerely,
A. D. GORWALA
(23 August 1976.)

* * * *

TODAY Indira is at the pinnacle of power, with Parliament itself, at her word, legalising her tyranny, turning it into the permanent law of the land, while her young son, whom she is grooming to be her heir, goes round the country receiving homage, lording it over Chief Ministers, Presidents of Congress Committees and business tycoons.

Today in India Indira's slightest gesture has paramount significance. At her nod, six policemen in jeeps swoop down on a grey-haired lady in her sixties, an eminent scholar of great integrity, President of a state writers' association, as she sits working at her desk in a library, and carry her off to jail. Her crime ? Who knows ? Her remedy ? Who knows ? Very probably none, since arrests and imprisonment under MISA are now non-justiciable, and in any case, the Courts have by and large become

in Bacon's phrase 'Lions under the throne'. Indira's right to imprison a person, high or low, for reasons of state, which she need not give and which no court can go into or even seek to learn, is no longer denied. All of us, citizens of India, are now not free as of right; no, if we still harbour the illusion of freedom, it is by her pleasure, and by her pleasure alone. Every person's liberty, every person's life, every person's property is subject to her will. Good it is to see things as they are, even if that disturbs the peace of mind of the leaders in every field who stride along with her heads held high, complacent in their now-illusory authority; of the ordinary citizen who goes about as he used to thinking himself to be free as in the past. Freedom is dead; sing its dirge if you will, but do not pretend to comfort yourselves and others that it is still alive."

(5 November 1976)

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A HIGH Delhi dignitary recently added greatly to the gaiety of the nation. In all seriousness, he pronounced, that Now the Press in India reflects the dreams of the Indian people. The only appropriate comment on this egregious dream-reading can be 'Really ? Ha, ha, ha, ha ! Wonderful ! Ho, ho, ho !' Much more to the point it would have been had he applied himself to the basic question: Does the Press in India now fulfil its primary function of informing the people, of giving them the news ? Consider this instance. Being in New Delhi last month I learnt one afternoon that the previous day the office of a leading political party, the Congress (Organisation) had been sealed by Authority, that some of the office equipment had been taken away and that the Office Secretary, an employee of the Congress of about thirty years' standing, had been arrested and detained. Now was this news ? Undoubtedly, of the first order, meriting inclusion in the front page of any newspaper worth the name, under a banner headline. Was it difficult to get ? Certainly not, the Congress (O) office at 7 Jantar Mantar Road is in the heart of New Delhi and within a short time the happenings there would be widely known ! Yet no single newspaper in Delhi carried a report next day or the day after or the day after that. Nor, to my knowledge, would any reference to the incident seem to have been made by any newspaper in India up to now. For the Press, it was a non-event. Clearly the Press did not serve its primary, its most essential, purpose of informing the people. This case came to notice. Hundreds of such cases of *suppressio veri* occur all over the country. Clearly, whatever the Press reflects now, whether peoples' dreams or Rulers' visions, it may safely be concluded that it does not reflect the truth about happenings and conditions in India. . . .

Of her misdeeds men speak more in sorrow than in anger, and as I sat by the window in the Rajdhani on the way back, looking at the fast-changing scene, the first thought that came to my mind about her was, 'What a'n unfortunate woman ! Surely, the most unfortunate of human beings !' And it is true, too, for what greater misfortune can befall any creature than to be responsible, knowingly and willingly, for the destruction of the liberties of all her fellow citizens ? I felt sad for her,

very sad, and indignant with myself, and to a lesser degree with other Indians, that we had not, somehow or other, prevented this disaster that she has brought on herself and us, saved her from the terrible tragedy into which her insensate love for total and supreme power has led her. .. .

An Indian De Gaulle, of how, having absolute power, she will make young technocrats, free of political affiliations, her confidants and private councillors, give them a free hand to make the country run with milk and honey, and then, in the distant, distant future, hand over to a new kind of suitable democracy. The comparison is obviously mistaken. De Gaulle had no love of power for its own sake ; Indira loves it more than anything else. De Gaulle flung power away like a bagatelle, not once but twice ; Indira claps it tightly to her bosom all the time. De Gaulle took his young technocrats from men of high ability, distinguished attainments and impeccable character. The only approach Indira has made to a so-called technocrat is to her own son, of whom none of these three can be postulated, and any mention of whose name evokes in the place that knows him best, the epithet *goonda*. De Gaulle, even while making his changes, did not interfere with a free Press ; Indira brought in censorship from the very beginning and tightly controls the Press. The idea is in fact a rationalisation, one of the many to which people of liberal education and tradition resort, to reconcile themselves to the authoritarian regime. Today, yes, it is bad, yes perhaps it is, but the future, ah the future, when who can say, will be bright, oh so bright !

In Delhi nobody, just nobody, believes a word Indira says. The credibility gap is quite amazing. If you say to a taximan, 'The Prime Minister said so-and-so yesterday,' his answer with a shy smile is 'Isn't she very *chalak* ? And if you press further the reply will come, 'You don't believe her really, do you ? She says many things to many men. It's her habit.' A story is told about a dignitary who had the temerity to protest when she made a statement he felt to be incorrect. 'But Madame,' the poor fellow said, 'You told me the exact opposite three days ago.' 'Did I ?' said Indira with perfect composure. 'Well, I may have, but that was three days afo. Today, I say this. Any objection ?' Perhaps those who are close to her have a special way of telling when it is the truth that is emerging and when the opposite. But who is close to her in public affairs ? The answer would seem to be, no one for long, many by fits and starts. When X thinks he is getting on fine, he suddenly finds he is wanted no longer, Y has taken his place, and so forth and so on. The only one who is always there is the son, and the extent of consultation with him is still a secret, though there is no doubt she is thinking in terms of leaving him the Empire after her. His influence with her is considerable, though not yet complete, for which as for other small and large mercies one must be suitably grateful.

Here then is a ruler who evokes no special loyalty, no warm, glowing service, and who in return recognizes no loyalty to any under her. Usefulness, as she sees it, is her only criterion, but usefulness for a tyrant means many things, and so she has some very odd characters working for her, characters whose deeds she disclaims loudly when inconvenient

while quietly urging them on along the course they had taken.....

What, you will ask, about the Cabinet? Well, Delhi considers the Cabinet a cypher. It is full of sycophants who wait to see what Indira wants and then speak accordingly. Ministers in their departments are ruthlessly interfered with and all the important decisions are Indira's.

Much else could I relate about Delhi and perhaps even draw some conclusions. But this will have to do for now. One thing more though. You will agree that a regime such as this cannot from its very nature be a monument of stability." (20 December 1976)

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THE time between the proclamation of emergency in 1975 and the call for new Lok Sabha elections in 1977 may well be termed the period of the Triumph of the Life. During this period the lie spread throughout the country, trampling underfoot any that opposed it in the slightest degree, silencing by force or fraud the very few who dared to challenge it, altering the laws themselves to suit it, rewarding the many culpable that gathered round it knowingly or foolishly.

Nor have the originators and sponsors of the lie forsaken it to this day. On the contrary, they desire to raise its triumph to a new height by obtaining for it the suffrage of the people. You and I, good citizens, they wish, should put the noose around our neecks with our own hands and entrust the rope to them to pull at their will. 'Unity and Discipline,' they say, 'these make the country great. We are sure you want the country to be great, so you'll readily be united and disciplined behind us; such intelligent, such patriotic, people as you, are bound to see the logic, the justice, of this proposition. And it won't be merely for nothing. We are promising something to everybody, and what's more, acting on the promise in most cases before you even go to the polls.'

The commonest of the slogans by which tyrants flourish is Unity and Discipline. It was Napoleon's and Hitler's and Mussolini's and Stalin's and Mao's. Surely then Indira's too? One can understand why this should be so. The dictator is stronger, the more he combines the people behind him. The dictator is more powerful, the more obediently and unquestioningly the people carry out his demands. Unity and Discipline, rightly considered, are however methods, instruments. Both these are good or bad according to the purpose for which they are used. The Unity and Discipline of a group of bandits is bad for the country in which they operate, however good it may be for the bandit chief and hts more prominent followers. The Thugs were very united and highly disciplined; they perpetrated the most atrocious stranglings. Hitler's SS men were united and tremendously disciplined; they fed millions of people to the gas chambers. So Unity and Discipline for what? For the maintenance in power of a corrupt clique? No, certainly not. For the deprivation of the freedoms of the ordinary citizens? Of course not. Unity in such a cause would be against the national interest and disciplined action in support of it tantamount to oppression of the sick and the diseased. Unity and Discipline can never mean being united behind a tyrant, making his

tyranny easier by obeying implicitly his directions. Such behaviour, however well it suits him, serves the country very ill.

The character of this period of the Triumph of the Lic is well indicated bythe refusal of the authorities to permit me to bring to notice in *Opinion* the thoughts below, which, well known as they are, were 'Not Cleared' for publication :

But thou, want not, ask not,
Find full reward of right in doing right,
Let right deeds be thy motive,
Not the fruits thereof.
And live in action, labour,
Make thy acts thy piety,
Contemning gain and merit,
Equable in good and ill . . .

'Give me the liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely, according to conscience above all other liberties.'

'What is life ? It is not to stalk about, and draw fresh air or gaze upon the sun ; it is to be free.'

So, too, for the Independence Day of 1975, objection was raised to Socrates' noble address to the judges who found him guilty by 281 votes to 220.

Again, the exquisite Death Scene from *Phaedo*, showing Socrates at his best, remained 'Not Cleared'. The Triumph of the Lie clearly necessitated the elimination of even the slightest sign of its opposite, nobility of character and mind expressing the truth. It did not matter if the quality was displayed, as in several of the instances, over two thousand years ago. Ancient or modern, it was anathema to Indira and her myrmidons. Their regime, born through lies, nurtured by lies and flourishing on lies, could not tolerate it. Will you let this Triumph of the Lie continue ? Or will you firmly say to it, its authors and sycophants, 'Enough ; tomorrow belongs to the truth and me' ?"

(15 March 1977)

* * * *

54. Shri B. Venkatappiah,
B3/59, Safdayang Endowe,
New Delhi 110 016.

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